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NWS Co-Alternates, Judy Surber & Gabrielle LaRoche
Staff: Pat Pearson & Gabrielle LaRoche

MRC Members:

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Dave Robison, District 1-pending
Anne Murphy, District 2
Tony Petrillo, District 2
Andrew Palmer, District 2 alt.
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Jim Donaldson, District 3 alt.
Judy Surber, City of Port Townsend
Phil Johnson, Jeff. Co. BOCC
Pat Pearson, Jeff. Co. WSU Ext.
Aleta Erickson, Jamestown S'klallam Tribe
Joth Davis, Commercial Interest
Judy D'Amore, Environment
Caroline Gibson, Marine Science Practitioner
Larry Crockett, Port of Port Townsend
John Cambalik, PS Partnership
Hyatt Barnes, Recreation
Stephen Lewis, Recreation alt
_____, U.S. Navy, Indian Is.



Mr. Kyle Murphy
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Aquatic Resources Division
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April 2, 2008

Dear Mr. Murphy,

At the April 1, 2008 meeting the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) voted to support People For Puget Sound's (PPS) nomination for designation of the aquatic lands surrounding Protection Island as a Washington State Department of Natural Resources aquatic reserve.

The Jefferson County MRC is a citizen-based effort to identify regional marine issues, foster community understanding and involvement, recommend positive action and develop support for various protection and restoration measures. Our members include representatives of local, tribal and state governments, business, recreation, marine scientists, and others from the community with a common interest in protecting and restoring vital marine resources.

Protection Island and its surrounding waters are important habitat for marine bird species, mammals, and other wildlife. In general, the MRC seeks to support programs that facilitate protection, restoration, and enhancement of this area. The MRC understands that the aquatic reserve designation can help DNR better manage existing and future leases of state-owned tidelands to ensure its natural, cultural, and recreational resources are protected over the long-term. It can also facilitate coordination between federal, state and local agencies, lease-holders, user groups, and the public with the common goal of long-term protection and restoration of this area.

During the review of the proposal, it was brought to our attention that there is concern among members of the public with regard to potential impacts of the aquatic reserve designation on sport fishing. It is our understanding that such a designation has no impact on fishing interests, other than potentially to what would be considered harvesting on leased tidelands. It is with this understanding that the Jefferson MRC is supporting the nomination.

In addition, during our review of the draft nomination, the Jefferson MRC recommended extending the eastern boundary of the designation around Protection Island in a symmetric fashion. We understand that the boundary adjustment has been made in the final PPS submittal to you. We believe that there is adequate justification for the boundary adjustment and are available to provide such justification.

Finally, we are pleased that the nomination process will include ample opportunities for the MRC and others to identify and discuss the specific management strategies that may be appropriate for the Protection Island site. Please notify us during the various stages of the nomination process so that we may provide input.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 360-531-2458.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle LaRoche
MRC Program Manager

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